

# ITALIANA

HARRIOT WOLFF





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WITH THE PUBLISHER'S COMPLIMENTS.

ITALIANA







# ITALIANA

BY

HARRIOT WOLFF



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1914



PR  
6045  
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*To C. B. H. W.*

*A trembling bark upon the sea  
Is this frail craft of Southern lore,  
But let your heart its haven be;  
—Ne'er could it reach a fonder shore.*

941954



## NOTE

THIS little book consists of verses for the most part connected with Italy. The bulk are translations from the works of various poets, to whom and to whose publishers the authoress offers her grateful acknowledgments. The rest consist of renderings into verse of portions of letters received from her son Carl B. H. Wolff.



I FAIN would echo in a kindred tongue—  
Albeit reft of many a subtle grace—  
Rare alien songs whereon I rapt have hung;  
The rhythms sweet by fellow-pilgrims sung,  
Who trod, like me, entranced in Beauty's trace.

H. W.





# CONTENTS

PAUL HEYSE

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I WANDERED WITH MY PALETTE THROUGH THE LAND .                | 3    |
| TWO RAGAMUFFINS ON THE PROMENADE . . .                       | 4    |
| HAD ADAM HERE FIRST SEEN THE LIGHT OF DAY .                  | 5    |
| A SUNBURNT FACE—ONE THAT YOU WON'T FORGET .                  | 6    |
| FORTY SHOPMEN ON THE SHINING COAST . . .                     | 7    |
| IN THE MUSEUM . . . . .                                      | 8    |
| NOT TURNED FOURTEEN—AND YET YOU HAVE A WAY .                 | 9    |
| AT CAPRI . . . . .   | 10   |
| IN THE NEW CEMETERY . . . . .                                | 11   |
| ON CHARMS YOU LIGHT, WHERE'ER YOU TURN YOUR<br>EYE . . . . . | 12   |
| VILLA N. . . . .   | 13   |
| SAN MARTINO . . . . .  | 14   |
| VIRGIL'S GRAVE . . . . .                                     | 15   |
| THE LAST PALE ROSEBUD FROM THE BUSH IS SWIRLED .             | 16   |
| WHEN DAY, AWEARY, FOLDS ITS DROOPING WINGS .                 | 18   |
| AT DAWN METHOUGHT I HEARD LIGHT FOOTSTEPS TREAD              | 19   |
| THAT, ALL TOO POOR, THE WORLD CAN NE'ER REPLACE              | 20   |
| OH, THERE WAS NAUGHT IN HEAVEN OR ON EARTH .                 | 21   |
| COME, LET US BIND A WREATH! SEE EVERYWHERE .                 | 22   |
| OF LATE MY HEART LONG ERE THE MORNING BROKE .                | 23   |
| WHEN I FOR YOU, MY BOY, IN DAYS AGO . . .                    | 24   |

# Contents

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I LONG HAVE BURIED EVERY ASPIRATION . . . . .      | 25   |
| COMING HOME . . . . .                              | 26   |
| AT HOME . . . . .                                  | 28   |
| YEAR OF GRIEF, THY ROUND IS WROUGHT . . . . .      | 29   |
| ANTIQUITIES . . . . .                              | 31   |
| BRESCIA . . . . .                                  | 32   |
| TURIN . . . . .                                    | 33   |
| PARMA (CORREGGIO—MADONNA DELLA SCODELLA) . . . . . | 34   |
| VENICE . . . . .                                   | 35   |
| VERONA . . . . .                                   | 36   |
| RIVA . . . . .                                     | 37   |

## FRIDA SCHANZ

|  |    |
|--|----|
| IN ONE SMALL SHOP YOU SEE CHURCH-SILVER GLEAMING . . . . .       | 41 |
| SOFT FLECKS OF SHEEN, WIND-BLOWN, IN ETHER<br>SWEEPING . . . . . | 42 |
| THE ALDERS STAND, A PALE, PALE GREEN NOW TURNING . . . . .       | 43 |
| LOW-BOWING CHORISTERS. RICH INCENSE FLOATS . . . . .             | 44 |
| WHITE PIGEONS ROUND THE PIAZZETTA FLUTTER . . . . .              | 45 |
| ON MOLTEN SILVER MOUNTS A YELLOW SAIL . . . . .                  | 46 |
| A LITTLE BURYING-GROUND. IN FRONT FOUR ROWS . . . . .            | 47 |

## HERMANN HESSE

|   |    |
|---|----|
| ELIZABETH . . . . .                           | 51 |
| THE WOMEN OF RAVENNA . . . . .                | 52 |
| THE CLOISTER-AISLE OF SANTO STEFANO . . . . . | 53 |
| RAVENNA . . . . .                             | 54 |

# Contents

PAGE

|   |    |
|---|----|
| IN THE NORTH . . . . .                  | 55 |
| CHIOGGIA . . . . .                      | 56 |
| PADUA . . . . .                         | 57 |
| THE CYPRESSES OF SAN CLEMENTO . . . . . | 58 |

## ERNST ZIEL

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| ISOLA BELLA . . . . . | 61 |
|-----------------------|----|

## IRENE FORBES-MOSSE

|   |    |
|---|----|
| TO THE FLOWING FOUNTAINS (VILLA MEDICI, ROME) | 65 |
| GUITARS IN THE NIGHT . . . . .                | 66 |

## GIOSUÈ CARDUCCI

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| THE BURIAL OF THE GUIDE . . . . . | 69 |
|-----------------------------------|----|

## BARON VON TAUBE

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| A TUSCAN LANDSCAPE . . . . . | 73 |
|------------------------------|----|

## RAINER M. RILKE

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| THE BELDAME . . . . . | 77 |
|-----------------------|----|

## CARL B. H. WOLFF

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| ADDIO, NAPOLI! . . . . .        | 81 |
| GOD'S GARDEN . . . . .          | 83 |
| THE MAIDENS OF AMALFI . . . . . | 85 |
| THE CYCLOPEAN WALL . . . . .    | 86 |
| THE ITALIAN PSYCHE . . . . .    | 88 |
| VIALE DEI COLLI . . . . .       | 89 |

# Contents

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| THE DESERTED TOWN . . . . .             | 91   |
| THE VILLA-HILLS OF FLORENCE . . . . .   | 92   |
| THE SPIRIT OF THE RUINS . . . . .       | 94   |
| MAUNDY-THURSDAY IN SAN PIETRO . . . . . | 95   |
| EARLY GOTHIC . . . . .                  | 97   |
| HALCYON HOURS (FRASCATI) . . . . .      | 98   |
| DANTE'S GRAVE . . . . .                 | 99   |
| EVENING WALK TO MALAMOCCO . . . . .     | 100  |
| A SILENT HOUR . . . . .                 | 101  |
| GENOA . . . . .                         | 102  |
| THE RUINS OF PAESTUM . . . . .          | 104  |
| THE SETTING SUN . . . . .               | 107  |
| FULFILMENT . . . . .                    | 109  |

PAUL HEYSE  
VERSE AUS ITALIEN  
VERLAG VON WILHELM HERTZ  
BERLIN  
1880



# Paul Heyse

## SKETCHES FROM NAPLES

I WANDERED with my palette through the land ;  
Once more resumed an old-time occupation,  
Full many a glimpse, and transient observation  
In colours fixing with a hasty hand.

Now here, now there, I passing took my stand,  
An ingrained dauber soon finds inspiration ;  
His tinctures blending with the delectation  
That from the first his vagrant fancy fanned.

These leaves thus loosely grew, where'er I halted,  
And of the moment's mood the trace they bore,  
Oft quaint and grave—oft in the style of Berni.

One need not always aim at things exalted,  
Not study too profoundly life's deep lore,  
Nor every flea sub specie aeterni !

## Paul Heyse

TWO ragamuffins on the promenade  
I met—one barefoot—and the other shod  
With such old shoes, they looked about as odd  
As the proverbial knife: nor haft, nor blade.

Yet envy on his comrade's features played,  
Who watched him, as with many a wink and nod  
The public causeway jauntily he trod,  
Enjoying fully the fine show he made.

Then, grinning, for a boot-black he fetched out  
The soldo that most likely long he'd lacked,  
But somehow begged or pilfered just before.

Presenting it, as who would say: "No doubt,  
If you have boots, then you can have them blacked—  
And if they're blacked—Why, you're a real Signor."



## Paul Heyse

HAD Adam here first seen the light of day,  
He ne'er had forfeited our Paradise!  
With Napoli's true humour in a trice  
His Maker's wrath he would have laughed away.

Lost in the multitude that crowds the bay,  
I gripped a groping hand—one not too nice—  
That probed my pocket—gripped it like a vice:  
“You rogue, I've caught you, have I!”—Caught him?—  
Nay!

For like an eel he wriggled out of reach,  
And from a distance looking back at me  
With impudence, in its own way sublime,

He waved his hand, that said as plain as speech,  
Affecting finest, purest sympathy:  
“Patience, Signor, and better luck next time!”

## Paul Heyse

A SUNBURNT face—one that you won't forget—  
With whitest teeth, a roguish pair of eyes,  
And jet-black hair that, all confusion, flies  
In elfin locks—she's quite a picture!—yet

Her thoughts on one delight alone are set—  
When stretched full-length in warm sea-sand she lies;  
For with the women oft betimes she hies  
To help the fishermen drag in the net.

Then at her door her wheel she, singing, whirls  
And pleads: "Signor," if you should chance that way,  
"Muojò di fame!"—laughing all the same.

She well may laugh!—those pearly teeth, those curls,  
And all the rest that's real in her array,  
Might rouse the envy of the richest dame.

## Paul Heyse

FORTY shopmen on the shining coast  
Of rare Sorrento, facing the blue ocean,  
Had duly met to hold with much commotion  
Their annual feast—the best their year could boast.

Soup, fish, macaroni, fruit, the crowning roast,  
—All for two francs a head—With what devotion  
Those forty shopmen kept their jaws in motion,  
To get their money's worth from that good host!

And then they sang and twanged the mandoline,  
Traviata, Troubadour—a rousing scene;  
—The forti was their field, not the piani.

The waiter, hovering round them, pursed his lips:  
“Forty to dine—two paltry francs the tips!  
“Ma che volete? Son Napoletani!”

# Paul Heyse

## IN THE MUSEUM

ON Sundays, feast days too, if I'm not wrong,  
The public have admission gratis here.  
In crowds they enter, glad no fee to fear,  
And look about and laugh and lounge along.

A craftsman's wife I noticed—through the throng  
She bore her infant; screaming it came near,  
Hunger and temper shrilling in my ear,  
Its limbs as strenuous as its ire was strong.

In haste uncovering a swelling breast,  
Her babe she suckled, while her eyes with zest,  
As on she went, drank eagerly their part.

O! happy people! in the Sabbath-rest  
Of innocence imbibing, doubly blest,  
With mother's milk the mollient draught of Art!

## Paul Heyse

NOT turned fourteen—and yet you have a way  
Of smiling, graceful child, such grown-up airs,  
That when your lips dilate on love affairs,  
“Her own experience!” listeners well might say.

And there is one—or are there several, pray?—  
With serious intentions, whom that smile ensnares.  
It yet may win, who knows, all unawares  
Your weak Mama’s own gallant some fine day.

How chic is all you wear and say and do!  
Your cook and your modiste are both first-class.  
The best Confessor guards your soul, good sooth!

And all the men-folk ogling follow you.  
Yes, Signorina, all is yours—alas,  
A trifle only yet is lacking: Youth!

# Paul Heyse

## AT CAPRI

BAREFOOT, with cries most crude to alien ear,  
Uphill she urged our mule—her hair ablow,  
Her sunny southern eyes with life aglow,  
She chattered on—child-like without a fear.

“My name’s Concetta. On our island here  
“Most girls are pretty. Yes, some years ago  
“A rich Milordo came and made, you know,  
“A Capri girl his wife. Ah dear! ah dear!

“What use was all the luck without her mother?  
“She pined for home. It snowed too—Poveretta!  
“Poor gentleman!—and so his sweet bride died.

“They say he’s coming now to fetch another!”  
—“Could you, perhaps, make up your mind, Concetta?”  
And “Eh, *potrebbe darsi*.” she replied.

# Paul Heyse

## IN THE NEW CEMETERY

**I**N soft caressing colours died the day.  
Capri, the ocean sphinx, was bathed in gold;  
A violet haze seemed fondly to enfold  
Sorrento; round St. Elmo twilight lay.

No breeze awoke—a breathless hush held sway.  
The smoke that from the fiery mount uprolled  
Hung high, like beaten silver to behold  
—The only shadow near or far away.

And then methought: though pessimists agree  
'Tis better far not-being than to-be!  
—For one glad glimpse of all this glory lying,

Good Christians, round you—for this sunset-glow,  
Would ye not yield the not-to-be below,  
Where dark ye lie, the grass above you sighing!

## Paul Heyse

ON charms you light, where'er you turn your eye,  
No matter whether gray your hair or golden,  
You comprehend that ardent word and olden  
And eagerly repeat it: See and die!

For this pure pearl beneath Italian sky  
To Heaven's humanest mood are we beholden.  
No flaw is here, the cynic to embolden,  
—These iridescent tints nor fade nor fly.

As in a mart, what here you seek you find,  
Both art and nature riches round you rain,  
That naught be lacking in the lustrous whole.

And everything is perfect of its kind.  
One charm alone you here will seek in vain:  
The simple beauty of a lovely soul.



# Paul Heyse

## VILLA N.

I KNEW this house in youthful years of yore;  
On marble statues, scutcheons, walls all gleaming  
With glint of gold, the sunny light was streaming—  
I paused—on such perfection long to pore.

An air of abnegation hovers o'er  
The glory now and dulls the tints—a dreaming  
Regardlessness in house and park, meseeming  
E'en fairer than that faultlessness before.

Like some proud spirit that, too long submitted  
To duty's stern demands of highborn station,  
Has cast the trappings of a vain array.

For steadfast Nature never is outwitted!  
The heart aye yields to innate inclination  
For freedom, gladly shunning all display.

# Paul Heyse

## SAN MARTINO

O H, once ye dwelt like sons of royal birth,  
High o'er the visne in eyried pride aloof,  
Carthusian monks—in silence proffering proof:  
Needless all speech, save God's own Word on earth.

Monarchs indeed were ye, who knew no dearth,  
Since art and nature vied for your behoof;  
St. Elmo's fort was guardian of your roof,  
That treasures boasted of unbounded worth.

Back to the world again were ye constrained;  
Nor ancient riches as your right remained,  
Nor peace of that cool cloister, marble-stoned.

And yet all now is yours, if ye but will,  
Since he who learns, all seeing, to be still,  
Is mightiest monarch, e'en though disenthroned.

# Paul Heyse

## VIRGIL'S GRAVE

AS Fortune's favourite thou to fame art known,  
For, reaping all a great forerunner's grace,  
Thy glory through the hoary years no trace  
Of fading knows, or dimness e'er hath shown.

Again a giant raised thee to his throne—  
With thee as guide unflinching did he face  
The fires of Hell . . . Whole ages into space  
Shall ever pass, yet all thy name shall own.

Although thy songs of shepherds and their sheep  
Ne'er moved the world to raptures wild and deep,  
Thee as the Poets' Wizard fame reveres.

Earth's fairest spot thy resting place can boast;  
Disciples mount thereto, high o'er the coast;  
As pilgrims seek the tombs of saints and seers.

# Paul Heyse

## DIARY

THE last pale rosebud from the bush is swirled—  
An autumn wind is wailing through the world.

So much is needless now that used to be  
Congenial winter work for you and me.

All the preparing in our solitude,  
The hopeful caring ne'er will be renewed.

The little footprints to and from the door,  
When snow had fallen, we shall trace no more.

No laddie's face, aglow, will listening sit  
Beside us when the lamp at eve is lit.

Stern winter, with its blustering bleakness, naught  
But desolation to our hearth has brought.

Like caterpillars now we two should spin  
Ourselves in numbness for the winter in.

## Paul Heyse

Yet no!—we must be strong! Come, you and I  
Swift in the swallows' track will southward fly.

The sun—who knows! the beggar's friend in need,  
Might aid us both, who beggared are indeed,

To feel a homelike warmth in alien air,  
Our own fireside so desolate and bare.

## Paul Heyse

WHEN day, weary, folds its drooping wings  
And golden stars are peeping from above,  
Rispetti here the lover softly sings  
Below the lattice of his listening love.

I sing them at a little new-made mound,  
'Neath which what most I cherished slumber found.

No whisper answers me, no welcome—reft  
Of all life's light, a shade alone is left.

## Paul Heyse

AT dawn methought I heard light footsteps tread,  
And started up—Yes, yes, that was your tap!  
“May I come in, Papa?” you always said,  
With winning smile fast following on your rap.

And in the evening, strolling on the strand,  
Warm, warm in mine I felt a chubby hand.

And where the tide had washed huge stones ashore,  
“Take care!” I warned you—warned as oft before.

## Paul Heyse

THAT, all too poor, the world can ne'er replace  
Our treasure—dumbly must we recognize,  
Lest it retort with cold and placid face:  
The pearl we lose, we may too highly prize.

Between us two you may admit it though,  
That now through life impoverished we go.

Between us two I frankly may confess:  
No bliss like that we lost our life can bless.



## Paul Heyse

O H, there was naught in heaven or on earth  
That souls athirst for beauty dearly prize,  
Whose innate charm was not enhanced in worth,  
My child, when imaged in your cherished eyes.

That undimmed mirror suddenly was broken;  
The world for us its final word has spoken.

What it reflects no joy to us imparts,  
Who, pleasure-blind, look only in our hearts.

## Paul Heyse

COME, let us bind a wreath!—See, everywhere  
Anemones are gleaming in the glade—  
Well-packed we then will send it home, love,—there  
Upon our laddie's grave it shall be laid.

His little hillock now is white with snow,  
While all around us blooms of springtime blow.

The sun of Rome is warm with wakening light,  
But he is sleeping in eternal night.

Oh, worse than poverty doth plenty sting,  
When one we love is reft of everything!

## Paul Heyse

OF late, my heart, long ere the morning broke,  
Would wake me with its throbbing and indite  
Rhyme upon rhyme that to myself I spoke  
And noiselessly wrote down by candlelight.

Then in the hush of eve my love would list  
While from my lips line after line she kissed.

Not thus will this nocturnal rhyme be blest,  
—It only serves to rob me of my rest ;

It only shields a heart, in anguish tost,  
From dreams, my child, that you we had not lost.

## Paul Heyse

WHEN I for you, my boy, in days ago  
To dizzy heights oft spurred imagination,  
You smiled when finished our confabulation:  
“I understand a jest, Papa, you know.”

And rippling laughter round your lips would flow,  
Your eyes uplighting with what animation!  
—It was the dawning mind, whose divination  
In humour saw life's golden blossom blow.

But one that did not understand was Fate  
—Stern Fate with unrelenting iron will  
All, all our little unborn jests bespoke.

I listen early and I listen late—  
What is there worth a laugh?—The world is still,  
Since life itself turned out a wretched joke.

## Paul Heyse

I LONG have buried every aspiration  
To drain Joy's draught; in bright success to sun  
My saddened soul; ambition I have none  
And in low greed aye shunned participation.

Thus on I wend my way with resignation,  
Low-bowed the head that erst, life scarce begun,  
I held so high.—Yet ere my course is run  
I for a space crave Youth's full restoration.

For in my brain I feel a pulsing might,  
A force unborn—whate'er it may betoken,  
God grant that I may let it see the light!

But oft I fear creative power is broken  
And I must e'en descend into the night  
All dumbly ere my final word is spoken.

# Paul Heyse

## COMING HOME

A HOUSE stands in a garden  
That borders on a grove,  
—However far I wandered  
My longing backward strove.  
There all day long  
Trilled woodland song  
And smiling flowers bright carpets spread.  
When near I drew  
My footsteps flew,  
—That coming home henceforth I dread.

There is an airy chamber  
Beneath that roof—the sun  
Peers in through every peephole  
Before his round is run.  
And there with voice upringing  
A merry child was singing  
Amid its toys—a motley store.  
My day's work wrought,  
There rest I sought,  
—That door I open now no more.

## Paul Heyse

A name of old was spoken,  
From every lip it came.  
As in a magic token,  
Lay virtue in that name;  
O'er every face  
Would flit a trace  
Of joy when it was breathed of yore.  
—With ghostly air  
It lingers there,  
But lips that speak it smile no more.

# Paul Heyse

## AT HOME

THE rush of life is round me,  
—Thy rest is still—how still!  
I hear the ring of voices,  
—Not one that loud rejoices  
To thee can ever thrill.

Oh, what a burst of blossom  
Beneath a sunlight sky!  
—Thy limbs, with ice-cold stricken,  
No vernal breath can quicken,  
No sunbeam vivify.

The throstles that once piped thee  
From dreams at peep of day  
Another brood are heeding,  
New little ones are feeding,  
—Thy nest is lone for aye.



## Paul Heyse

YEAR of grief, thy round is wrought!  
—Time, the healing nurse, unheeding,  
Has not brought  
Balm for wounds that still are bleeding.

She, who was so skilled of yore,  
Now is failing—all her lotions  
Ease no more,  
Lacking virtue are her potions.

Once she watched beside my bed,  
Smiling, crumpled pillows smoothing,  
Dreams of dread  
Tranquillizing, ever soothing.

Sceptic now, like some old leech,  
Used to look on corpses boldly,  
Noting each  
Lethal sign, she mutters coldly :

“ Human skill avails no more ;  
Cordials cannot cure or quicken,  
—At the core  
All vitality is stricken.

## Paul Heyse

“ Once thou boasted early weal.  
—Balsam in the life-blood bearing,  
Hearts soon heal,  
Youthful hearts, all dash and daring.

“ Anodyne for every ill  
Is, when chronic aches encumber,  
Keeping still,  
Drowsing into endless slumber.”

# Paul Heyse

## SONNETS FROM ROME

### ANTIQUITIES

ETRUSCAN vases, bracelets, urns and sandals,  
Bright painted amphora, bellying out and vast,  
Pompeian lamps, black as they flared their last,  
Old coins, quaint holders for tall altar candles.

—Whate'er was spared us by the Goths and Vandals,  
Wherewith the present profits from the past,  
'Tis here!—On many a prize your eye is cast  
That, as its own, Art-lust already handles.

But if your purse is lean, be not dismayed  
That as possessor you may little hold  
Of all the rarities exposed to view,

Since wholesale here antiquities are made,  
Naught but the vendor genuine and old,  
—A genuine old fox and Ghetto-Jew.

# Paul Heyse

## CIVIL PICTURES

### BRESCIA

THY charms, fair Brescia, tempt my soul anew,  
Moretto's regal women once again  
Would I behold; for treasures I am fain  
That from the past their fascination drew.

As in a fairy-tale I wandered through  
Hushed streets with ancient mansions, whence no strain  
Passed, save the peacock's scream; to search were vain  
Tall towering garden-walls hid all from view.

But where the temple-ruins dumbly greet  
Through dark fig-foliage, there I entered in  
And saw on high the queenliest Victory stand.

With reverence filled I rested at her feet.  
Oh, Goddess, why of Bronze? bliss, bliss to win  
A coronal from such a living hand!

# Paul Heyse

## TURIN

**L**IKE to a hero, simple, still and proud,  
Who, scantily thanked, when he has stood the test,  
Is thrust aside and with unruffled breast  
In silence dwells far from the fickle crowd,

E'en thus, as unto dull oblivion vowed,  
Turin, thou musest!—Gravely on thy rest  
Looks the Superga from the upland crest,  
Where slumbering lie thy nobles in their shroud.

Forsaken, lone, thy royal castle lies,  
—The nest, whence upward flew to victory  
Savoy's swift eagle with the strength that wills.

Yet unforgot, mid all its high emprise,  
The cradle of its youth shall ever be  
In that new eyrie on the Seven Hills.

# Paul Heyse

## PARMA

(CORREGGIO—MADONNA DELLA SCODELLA)

**L**O, to the loftiest height of Heaven arose  
Thine angel-choir in rapturous adoration!  
—Thou, too, didst love, in shadowy contemplation  
On dazzling day thy dreamy eyes to close.

The twilight of the soul thy fancy chose,  
Thence drawing this Madonna's inspiration.  
Full worthy she in thy sublime creation  
That at her feet high Heaven should low repose!

Yet is she still of earth—palms o'er her waving,  
She rests; beside her is the godly child.  
An angel fills a chalice at the stream

To satisfy the fair-haired infant's craving.  
Meanwhile the mother, musing still and mild,  
Is smiling softly in a wondrous dream.

# Paul Heyse

## VENICE

**D**ETHRONED the proud affianced of the sea,  
Who held so high her queenly head of old!  
No more in gorgeous galley, gilt with gold,  
Espoused to her bold wooer will she be.

But in the vernal nights, when mightily  
The spring-tide mounts—as if it would enfold  
In wild embrace, her who with glances cold  
Looks down by day—then helpless seemeth she.

High o'er the Piazzetta swells the tide,  
Raging therein and flooding every street,  
Around St. Mark all fiercely forcing way,

In passion's fury suing for the bride—  
And yet it only dares to kiss her feet,  
Receding listlessly ere dawn of day.

# Paul Heyse

## VERONA

AS once she welcomed, so dismisses you  
Upon the threshold Italy's fair daughter,  
That evermore, with all the love you brought her,  
For her maternal warmth you long anew.

The southern grandeur that around you grew,  
The grace you found, when yearning first you sought  
her,  
Greet you once more—here imaged in the water,  
Ere you depart, epitomized you view.

The arch of triumph and the public places,  
The criers shrilling in the crowded mart,  
The amphitheatre, the dome, arcades,

Fond eyes, veiled forms—all these remembrance traces,  
With priceless gems of carved and pictured Art,  
And giant cypresses in Giusti-glades.



# Paul Heyse

## RIVA

FROM Riva toward the Ledro vale I bent  
My footsteps, where with force beyond description  
Ponale's cataracts defy restriction;  
But ere I gained the gorge in my ascent

I passed a house, and noticed fresh cement  
Upon a part of it, with this inscription  
Above the portal—this apt interdiction,  
Wherein roused ire found eloquently vent:

“Now hold your peace, accursed mountain wight,  
That recklessly, regardless of my right,  
Cam'st roaring down to batter in my door!”

Oh, none too high for them was thy cothurn,  
Good Father Shakespeare! Where did this boor learn  
The language kings and heroes loved of yore?



FRIDA SCHANZ  
ITALIENISCHE PASTELLE  
FRITZ ECKHARDT VERLAG  
LEIPZIG  
1910



## Frida Schanz

**I**N one small shop you see church-silver gleaming.  
Next door, through that dark arch, a copper dish.  
From all the houses graceful girls are streaming.  
—And here's a fisherman with shining fish.  
That fruit's inviting! Coils of fresh brown fritters  
Hang temptingly between pale loaves of bread.  
And from a lane the light of candles glitters  
As white-robed brothers carry out their dead.

## Frida Schanz

**S**OFT flecks of sheen, wind-blown, in ether  
sweeping,  
A white-walled villa, deep in foliage-gloom.  
Blue violets, from mossy grass up-peeping.  
Anemones that in red patches bloom.  
Just sketched on the horizon, aspens quiver.  
A cypress-shaded well. And, flushed with light,  
In shimmering iridescence rain-drops shiver  
On chaste camellias' cold and waxen white.

## Frida Schanz

THE alders stand, a pale, pale green now turning,  
With boughs entwined as for a veil-wreathed dance;  
The chestnut buds like amber-beads are burning,  
Their gloss the glistening raindrops but enhance;  
A flood of gold upon the willow lightens;  
The brooding dreamer hears the brooklet croon—  
And like red-silk Rosina's laughter brightens  
The soft, soft sheen of this fair afternoon.

## Frida Schanz

**L**OW-BOWING choristers. Rich incense floats.  
Tall altar-candles' flames ascend on high.  
—The huge old psalter with its leading notes  
Lies open—"Dies irae" strikes the eye.

The sun of summer, all aglow behind  
Rich storied windows, floods the flagstone floor—  
What tints, too!—'neath a sapphire wreath entwined  
With crimson band, lies flushed the mighty score!



## Frida Schanz

**W**HITE pigeons round the Piazzetta flutter.  
The boy with picture-cards is on his way—  
“For shame!—that isn’t honest, lad,” I mutter,  
“You’re asking double price, you know, to-day.”  
Abashed, he hangs his dark-haired head a while;  
Then darts at other victims presto! presto!

To-day he offers roses with a smile:  
“Vuole rose?”—“Oggi son onesto!”

## Frida Schanz

ON molten silver mounts a yellow sail.  
The setting sun but limns in smouldering fire  
The outlines sharp of many an ancient spire  
Against the sky, as fiercer ardours fail.  
On cloister-alleys roses riches fling.  
In lilac haze are merging lake and land.  
And three blind girls are walking hand in hand,  
Their slender throats upraising as they sing.

## Frida Schanz

A LITTLE burying-ground. In front four rows  
Of gloomy cypresses, each guardian file  
As though commanding: "Here let no lip smile!"  
—And up in Heaven a star that brightly glows.  
*Without*—her arms upon her bosom crost—  
A mother kneeling—after dusk—alone—  
*Within*—inscribed upon a tiny stone:  
"Sleep sweetly, love, the sleep that I have lost."



HERMANN HESSE

GEDICHTE

G. GROTE'SCHE VERLAGSBUCHHANDLUNG

BERLIN

1910



# Hermann Hesse

## ELIZABETH

UPON your brow, your cheeks and mouth  
The glamour lies I once beheld  
In pictures of the sunny South  
At Florence—masterworks of eld.

Queen of the May in morning dew,  
You lived in days of rare renown;  
And Botticelli painted you  
As Flora in a flowery gown.

Your guileless smile of girlish glee  
Awoke to summer Dante's eyes;  
Your foot, too, found unwittingly  
The sunny path to Paradise.

# Hermann Hesse

## THE WOMEN OF RAVENNA

THE women of Ravenna with their winning air,  
Their gentle gestures and their eyes' deep glow,  
Remembrance of the famous town still bear  
With all its festivals of long ago.

The women of Ravenna weep with tears that fall  
As full and still as silent children's may;  
And when they laugh, their laughter sounds withal  
Like merry music to a mournful lay.

The women of Ravenna, when to pray they kneel,  
Repeat their prayers, as little children do;  
And love-words they can lisp, and never feel  
The faintest fear that none of them are true.

The women of Ravenna kiss with lips that show  
A strange submission—lips that deeply sigh:  
And all of life Ravenna's women know  
Is naught but this:—That all are doomed to die.



# Hermann Hesse

## THE CLOISTER-AISLE OF SANTO STEFANO

I N four time-eaten walls I take my stand,  
Embellished once by Pordenone's hand.

The pictures paled—and here and there a trace  
Of faded frescoes only in their place,

An arm—a foot—attracts the roving eye,  
—The ghostly greeting of a grace gone by—

A laughing child, with eyes that look so glad,  
—And make the lone observer strangely sad.

# Hermann Hesse

## RAVENNA

I HALTED at Ravenna, too.  
The dismal little town is dead.  
Old ruined churches meet your view  
Wherever you may chance to tread.

You walk as in a land of dreams—  
The streets are all so silent there—  
For ages they have slept, it seems,  
And grass and moss grow everywhere.

But like a half-forgotten strain  
It haunts you,—when away you turn,  
You think of it; and yet again  
You think of it—and yearn.

# Hermann Hesse

## IN THE NORTH

**H**AZY hills in all my dreaming  
I behold; dark tree-tops swaying;  
Villas, rocks with sunlight streaming;  
Sparkling fountains, ever playing.

Fancy pictures, still beguiling,  
Churches, marble-white and slender,  
—Florence in a valley smiling,  
Florence in a flush of splendour.

In a garden, quaint and olden,  
Still awaits me, fain would find me,  
Luck, the luck so gay and golden,  
That I, leaving, left behind me.

# Hermann Hesse

## CHIOGGIA

WORLD-OLD façades, blackened by wind and weather,

With Mary and Babe in niches nestling together.

Shining canals with gondolas lazily swinging,

And fishermen brawny and brown—and laughter and singing.

Slumbering, though, on every stone is lying,

On every staircase, every moss-grown wall,

A desperate sorrow that, centuries still defying,

Visions long vanished dumbly would recall.

Lightly, lightly—by sudden alarm overtaken—

Over the flagstones I tiptoe, lest it awaken.

Should it awaken!—Ill bodings my bosom cumber,

I haste to the harbour—a bark on the eve of sailing,

A home-bound vessel joyfully, joyfully hailing.

—Lonely behind me leave I the lanes in their slumber.

# Hermann Hesse

## PADUA

**D**IM, narrow streets and gables looking down.  
How quaint! Just like a little German town.

Here I would halt and see without a sigh,  
Without a wish, uncounted hours pass by.

Here I would linger—rosy days of rest  
To laugh away upon a light love's breast,

Were only yonder not so wondrous bright,  
So crystalline the flowing, flooding light.

Up, up, away!—still eastward lies the goal,  
—Oh, Venice, Venice—vision of my soul!

# Hermann Hesse

## THE CYPRESSES OF SAN CLEMENTO

THE tips of our tapering boughs in the breeze we  
sway,

On gardens we gaze with women as bright as the day,  
—All life and laughter—and guard over gardens we  
keep,

Where men are born—and where they are laid to sleep.

On temples we look where deep in the gloomy glade  
Devotees of old their sacrifice solemnly made;  
But the gods are dead—their images overthrown,  
—Profaned their temple—bare their altar-stone.

We look on lowlands lapped in sunny light,  
Where men make merry—mourn—and pass from sight.  
Age after age but born to live their day,  
—And in their sepulchres each other lay.

But when in the night-watch blustering storm-winds  
blow,

Grasping the ground with our fibres, low, so low  
We cower, withstanding—wondering, scared and shy,  
If death will at last overtake us, or pass us by.

ERNST ZIEL  
AUSGEWÄHLTE GEDICHTE  
DEUTSCHE VERLAGS ANSTALT  
STUTTGART & LEIPZIG  
1901





# Ernst Ziel

## ISOLA BELLA

PEARL of the waters, peacefulest isle,  
Gem of the Lago Maggiore,  
Welcome is waving with sunniest smile  
Thy giardino d'amore.  
Rarest aromas disperse  
Over thy terrace-crowned height;  
Blossoms of natures diverse  
Dost thou all fondly unite:  
Dark in the twilight shade  
Slumber the pines of the glade,  
While in white almond trees  
Sighs the soft amorous breeze:  
Tu mia stella,  
Isola bella!

Not only flowers impart  
Charm to thy magic strand,  
Thou art a temple of art  
Raised by a master-hand;  
Vitaliani's name  
Honours thy landing-place;  
Tempesta's painter-fame  
Gives to thy castle grace:

## Ernst Ziel

If, as of old, to-day  
Muses yet passed this way,  
Charmed by thy sunny smile,  
They would exclaim "Mine isle,  
Tu mia stella,  
Isola bella!"

When all the tops of the trees  
Sway in the evening air,  
Soft on my soul with the breeze  
Stealeth the spirit of prayer.  
Sombre the tints thou dost take,  
Deep as a purple pall,  
While all the bells of the lake  
Unto devotion call.  
Sweetest of harmonies floats  
Over the lake and the land;  
Greeting afar in their boats,  
Fishers and ferrymen stand:  
Tu mia stella,  
Isola bella!

IRENE FORBES-MOSSE  
PEREGRINA'S SOMMERABENDE

INSEL-VERLAG

LEIPZIG

1904-5



# Irene Forbes-Mosse

## TO THE FLOWING FOUNTAINS

(VILLA MEDICI, ROME)

YE ancient fountains that calm coolness breathe,  
And memory still in world-forgetfulness,  
Full many a weary listener hath found cease  
Of unrest here, exchanging it for peace,  
—The peace of soul he might not erst possess.

In leafy walks ye whisper all alone,  
And tempt to twilight-shades where, deeper still,  
The curious sun their gloom has scarcely stirred,  
And fearlessly the thirsty little bird  
Into the moss-edged basin dips its bill.

I, tempest tossed, of all I prized bereft,  
—Though not like you by rime of age o'errun,  
That casts a tenderer charm around your stone—  
Now gazing in your depths so strangely lone,  
The peace of utter sadness here have won.

# Irene Forbes-Mosse

## GUITARS IN THE NIGHT

**H**ARK! guitars and voices singing  
Through the screen of lattice-shutters  
Gaily to my couch are ringing,  
While my curtain lightly flutters—  
    Snatches humming,  
    Twang, twang! strumming,  
Forms I love are passing by . . .  
    Footsteps flying . . .  
    Far off dying . . .  
“Bide, oh, bide, ye voice of music—golden voice!” I  
    softly sigh.

Lorn, behind barred shutters dreaming  
Broods my saddened soul repining—  
Stranger-faces past are streaming,  
Stars as strange o’erhead are shining:  
    Harps with olden  
    Measures golden  
Now to other days belong;  
    Memory lingers,  
    Unloved fingers  
Seek on strings, that tuneless tinkle, many a half-  
    forgotten song.

GIOSUÈ CARDUCCI  
CASA EDITRICE JANNICHELLI  
BOLOGNA





# Giosuè Carducci

## THE BURIAL OF THE GUIDE

WITH shattered hands, that erst on pass and peak  
Of peril grasped the pike where glaciers rise,  
Upon the bier the mountain-conqueror lies.

From Saxa they descend who bear the bier.  
“God grant him,” prays the priest, “eternal rest.”  
The women make response in tones suppress:

“And joy be his in everlasting light!”  
Athwart the dark-green whispering forest pines  
The funeral banner, softly waving, shines;

While fitfully, down-wafted from the height,  
Upon the wind,—oft near, oft far and dim—  
Floats solemnly the choristers’ sweet hymn.

And downward still the sad procession files  
With cautious feet; now coming into sight,  
Now lost to view in gloomy forest-night.

At length it pauses at the grave-yard gate . . .  
And now the coffin amid crosses stands;  
The priest imploring with uplifted hands:

## Giosuè Carducci

“God’s peace be thine, Emilio, Mountain-King!  
—To Mary daily did thy prayers ascend,  
And thou in godliness thy way didst wend.”

In mourning garb the women prostrate lie,  
For those whose foot had slipt their eyelids wet,  
—For those no less whose foot might stumble yet.

And suddenly the shroud that veils the scene  
Around Mont Blanc—the mist of ghostly gray—  
Is rent in twain, and lo! revealed to view

The rugged Dent-du-Géant—wrapt in sheen  
Defiantly maintaining regal sway—  
With jagged crown cleaves the unfathomed blue.

·BARON VON TAUBE

INSEL-VERLAG

LEIPZIG



## Baron von Taube

### A TUSCAN LANDSCAPE

**H**IGH granite hills arose, all grayly towering;  
Black cypresses upon the summits grew,  
With shapely outlines sombre shadows showering,  
And tapering spires that clove the cloudless blue.

The scent of garden-blossoms, far off blowing,  
With balmy airs of eve was softly blent;  
And every arrowy tip, erect and glowing,  
A solemn lustre to the landscape lent.



RAINER M. RILKE

INSEL-VERLAG

LEIPZIG





# Rainer M. Rilke

## THE BELDAME

THE white-haired old cronies, absorbed in to-day  
And their plans for to-morrow, merrily chatter,  
While others, apart, in a quieter way,  
Discuss some misfortune, some home-stirring matter,  
With the why and wherefore: "I think"—"I suppose,"  
They say, half perceptive of human restriction;  
But the wizened old woman in lace-lappets *knows*—  
"They're all in the wrong!" that's her certain conviction

And down on the head of the white coral pin  
That matches her brow and—as fine as the best of 'em—  
Closely fastens her shawl, she waggles her chin:  
"They're all in the wrong—they and the rest of 'em!"  
But once she outflashes—how dare they scoff so!—  
From wide-starting eyelids twin glances that glow  
And glitter; as one from a drawer all unknown,  
Priceless gems that are heirlooms a moment has shown.



CARL B. H. WOLFF



# Carl B. H. Wolff

## ADDIO, NAPOLI!

AND after all—and after all—  
What pain it is to part!—  
Once more, the while upon past times I ponder,  
And commune with my heart,  
Along the slopes for the last time I wander  
And pensively look down  
On Naples with its never ending clamour,  
On Naples with its ever blending glamour,  
—Sleepless and restless, fascinating town!

“And will you never more come back again?”  
Ah me, my footsteps evermore are beating  
Time to the words my heart is aye repeating,  
Words that still haunt me like some sweet refrain:  
“And will you never more come back again?”

A blue-eyed, comely son of Napoli  
It was, who thus at parting questioned me,  
And, from a green-gold orange-grove emerging,  
Athwart an ivy-grown dense boundary-wall,  
Upon my pathway verging,

## Carl B. H. Wolff

With ever courteous southern salutation,  
Me smiled into a road-side conversation,  
Whereof, 'neath sadder skies I still those words recall:  
"Non tornerete mai?"

—As low he spoke,  
He stooped, and from a flower-cluster broke  
A star-like bloom, that he, all gentle grace,  
Slipped in my button-hole with questioning face.  
It was the flower of deep forgetfulness

—The pale Anemone—

Nay, nay, fair Napoli!  
And though to thee I never more return,  
My heart remembering yet,  
In waking dreams will ever toward thee yearn  
—My heart cannot forget!

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## GOD'S GARDEN

**G**OD'S Garden!—sweet the name and meet.—  
When rambling through Sorrento,  
Perchance you found that charmed retreat?  
No gloomy thoughts the scene recalls:  
The sunlight so serenely falls,  
So bright the flowers, so sweet their breath,  
That wandering there one well might deem  
Naught but a brief and sunny dream  
Divided life from death.

And did you find, as you aimless strayed,  
By the crumbling wall in the cypress-glade  
The strangers' corner, too?  
Where, all neglected, roses glow,  
In myriads Parma-violets blow,  
And little flowers of every hue  
To the wooing winds their perfume fling;  
Where nightingales the sweetest sing  
—Search all the wide world through—  
And oh, so tenderly, up from the bay,  
The live-long day,  
Comes the lullaby of the cradling sea,  
As it croons of the far-away.

## Carl B. H. Wolff

I found a grave there—in the stone  
This dedication carved alone:—

“Thou whom I loved far more than life!”

World-old, heart-hungering human cry!  
That hallowing voice of lamentation  
In days love-lorn—days long gone by,  
Is breathing yet, is lingering nigh  
In the violet's scent, the breeze's sigh—  
On death's dark shrine love's last oblation.



# Carl B. H. Wolff

## THE MAIDENS OF AMALFI

FOR the nonce I lodging find  
Here, where bright with sun-kissed blossoms,  
Hanging gardens grace the house-tops,  
And a friendly, fine old fig-tree,  
—Broad five-fingered leaves outstretching  
Through the open-standing window—  
As I entered nodded welcome.  
I am lucky in my eyrie,  
Looking on the old piazza  
Opposite the gray cathedral,  
—Nearer still, the flowing fountain,  
Where the maidens of Amalfi  
Meet at even;—and unending  
Is the lively conversation  
As, with laughter bubbling over,  
They their earthen jars are filling;  
Then, as in the classic era,  
Lifting them upon their shoulders  
And with rhythmical slow footsteps  
To their thresholds all returning.  
—Homely is the little picture,  
But with grace 'tis overbrimming.

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## THE CYCLOPEAN WALL

**L**EISURELY I reconnoitre,  
High above Alatri loiter  
On the Cyclopean Wall  
—Long by leaguering ages blasted,  
Moss-grown vestiges recall  
Might of old, whose rise and fall  
But a wraith of fame outlasted.

Might of old ! Imagination  
Wakens with the word a yearning,  
—Yet I soon from years of yore,  
With their saddening: Nevermore,  
To the sunnier Now am turning:—  
Swarthy, lithe of limb and lusty  
Men amid the vines I view,  
Now erect and now low-bending,  
In their vests of scarlet hue  
Colour to the landscape lending.

Maidens to and fro are passing,  
Proud and graceful is their bearing,  
Passion in their lustrous eyes  
Half unconscious luring lies,  
Love's swift onslaught brightly daring.

## Carl B. H. Wolff

Yet upon their classic features  
Coldly utter calm repose—  
Hark!—the sunset-bell—Away!  
Eve is ringing out the day;  
Sweet and cool, as twilight closes,  
Comes ambrosial breath of roses.

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## THE ITALIAN PSYCHE

**A**N enigma—a psychical mystery  
In sooth are these Italians to me!  
Set amidst the men of the masses,  
Just for a moment a little child,  
How genuine, see, is their admiration,  
How jubilant every ejaculation,  
Even that smile of infatuation  
For childhood has charm, 'tis so motherly-mild . .  
Now watch them goading their beasts of burden,  
Nay! rather, I beg you, turn aside,  
Feigning—since prayers avail not—blindness.  
Can such cruelty, can such kindness  
Ever, I ask, in one breast abide!

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## VIALE DEI COLLI

THOUGH Nature never in the glare of day  
Appeals with such sweet suasion to the soul,  
Such secrecy, as when the shadows fall,  
Yet these fair slopes reveal her mystic power  
In gentlest night to work such glittering charm  
As holds the soul in thrall.

Could I transmute you, musical measures,  
Silvery cadences, could you reveal  
In light modulations the glistening glamour  
And glow of the fire-flies, gliding above,  
Or noiselessly flitting through blossoming bushes,  
Wherein the nightingale tells of her love!

Meseems through sultry sun-exhaling leaves  
In shimmering beads of silver and of gold  
From Heaven is trickling down the cooling dew;  
Or seems around in spangled atoms falling  
The mild mysterious moon  
That holds its course amid the far-off blue.

All motionless I stand beneath the trees  
With indrawn breath as one in dream expectant  
That lightly as a petal on the breeze

## Carl B. H. Wolff

And softly as a sigh,  
Through twilight-blue in flashing silver sheen  
From lonely laurel walks must needs flit by  
The fairy chariot of the Elfin Queen.

Of daybreak near  
How oft has warned me here  
With deep sonorous voice the turret-bell  
Of Palace Vecchio, tolling from afar,  
Ere, still 'neath Nature's sweet nocturnal spell,  
I tore myself from this enchanting scene  
To seek the vale lit by the Morning-star.

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## THE DESERTED TOWN

**N**INFA! of my boyhood's dreaming  
Ban-bound, baneful goal!—  
When afar I wayward wandered,  
On the unfamiliar pondered,  
Thou didst with the thought "Forsaken!"  
Overwhelm my soul!

Darkly green, the strangling ivy  
Over thee a mantle throws,  
—In thy shroud already lying,  
Slowly—slowly—slowly dying,  
Drear is thy last drowsy vision,  
Drear thy death-dream to the close.

And thy fevered breath enthrals me!  
Like a blighting curse appals me  
Thine unending church-yard-hush,  
Broken by the rainplash only,  
With the wind's wail, weird and lonely,  
And the frogs' triumphant chorus  
In the marsh-reeds, rank and lush.

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## THE VILLA HILLS OF FLORENCE

**M**Y wandering footsteps lead me day by day  
The same secluded way  
Along the peaceful villa-studded hills,  
—Hills ever sunnily in tune  
With all the pulsing poetry that thrills  
The joyful soul of June.

The lindens are in bloom ; their tufted crowns  
With gold-dust oversprinkled, all exhale  
Rich honey-sweetness down the slopes that belt  
With velvet verdure the reposeful vale,  
—Verdure in azure skies that seems to melt.

On these sequestered slopes the blackbirds throng  
In fondest love-elation ;  
All blithe their song the whole day long,  
Unending love's narration :  
In this seclusion too  
Shy throistles wing and woo.

Shield them, ye silvan gods, from ruthless wrong—  
Hark! sweetly they are fluting,  
To mellow notes of thrilling golden song  
Each throbbing ecstasy transmuting.



## Carl B. H. Wolff

And soon from slender campaniles flow  
Commingling strains of heavenly sweetness—lo!  
In soothing, soul-uplifting invocation  
The bells strike up the solemn evening hymn:  
Now silver-clear, now dulling down and dim,  
Afar is lost a last reverberation.

Meanwhile fair Arno broadly, brightly sweeps  
The red, red sunset gold, now ruddier grown  
Through gloomy bridges swiftly far away  
In darkly distance, over which the gray  
And ghostly mist a vapour-veil has thrown.

## Carl B. H. Wolff

### THE SPIRIT OF THE RUINS

WHERE keen-eyed connoisseurs of antique art,  
For treasures delving,  
The bosom of Rome have bared,  
Over her nakedness carpets of flowers,  
Aglow with colour, are spread.  
Not always does the treasure-trove  
Reward the delver's pains;  
But the swelling stem of a slender iris,  
Surmounting sheerly the shattered shaft  
Of a spotless marble column,  
Inspires with such sweet potency the soul,  
That with a living voice to you  
The Spirit of the Ruins speaks.

## Carl B. H. Wolff

### MAUNDY-THURSDAY IN SAN PIETRO

DEEP in the dome o'er all a dimness lay,  
That slowly darkened into twilight gray.  
The altar-candles of the celebration—  
Mere specks afar of misty yellow light—  
That until now had feebly glimmered on,  
Expired—as if in utter expiation  
All that was encheering, soul-uplifting, bright,  
From God's green earth for evermore was gone.  
Amid the spreading hush was heard alone  
The dull responses' doleful monotone;  
Till they too ceased, as into darkness waned  
The last dim light of day, and silence reigned.

But then a voice arose—one knew not whence—  
A faint soprano, long sustained and tense,  
Yet, as with failing breath,  
Sang in a minor key—'twas all so dreary,  
So full of sorrow—weary, weary, weary,  
Ay, weary unto death.  
Meseemed in that unnerving dire lament  
Nor tune, nor timbre with the voice was blent;

## Carl B. H. Wolff

But ah! more piteously with poignant power  
None other in Creation had appealed  
Unto man's soul, or unto sense revealed  
The vast annihilation of that hour  
—That hour of gloom and awe and deathly dread—  
Like this exhausted, wailing voice o'erhead,  
That higher, higher, ever higher soaring,  
E'en to the Golden Gates of God's own Grace,  
Shrill with despair seemed hopelessly imploring  
Mercy unmeet for aught so lost and base.

When with a deep-drawn sigh I stood without,  
Down from empyreal heights of Heaven's own blue  
Over the Borgo, over the fountains  
—Cooly-plashing ever-flowing fountains—  
Ah, how mildly, soothingly there fell  
In silvern waves upon my troubled soul  
The gentle benediction of the Easter-moon.

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## EARLY GOTHIC

'T WAS the churches—soul-appealing,  
Sense-subduing, art-revealing  
Structures, rising all around,  
That in Florence with my feeling  
Most in unison I found;  
With their pillars tall and slender  
—Lofty thoughts transformed to stone—  
That in language, pure and tender,  
Speak a pathos all their own,  
With their windows, high and pointed,  
Floods of roseate light displaying,  
And so quaintly God's Anointed—  
Virgins, holy men—portraying  
In ecstatic adoration,  
Whose resplendent aureole  
Is the holy exhalation  
Of a love-illuminated soul.

Grand old masters, long departed,  
Titan-handed, tender-hearted,  
Ye, on whom each new creation  
Dazzling broke—a revelation—  
Into art your souls ye threw  
—Souls with fair ideals teeming  
—Souls of boundless beauty dreaming,  
Art ye lived!—from life ye drew.

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## HALCYON HOURS

(FRASCATI)

O H, it was rapture to mount in the morning  
Amid the bees' soft soothing hum,  
With winter-cool stone-oaks for an awning,  
Up to the ruins of Tusculum;  
To gaze on the hills, in the distance rising,  
On the Campagna's misty round,  
Then—all the loveliness realizing—  
Into a sea of wild-thyme to bound.

Would that instead of words, as I wander,  
Blooms I could send you, from Nature's hand,  
Such as she loves to scatter and squander  
Here in this glorious blossom-land;  
Fragrant myrtle, and purple heather,  
Foliage, snatched from meadow and grove,  
Tied with a love-knot of thoughts together  
—Thoughts ever near you, though far I rove.

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## DANTE'S GRAVE

A VE, vestal-eyed Ravenna!  
Grant at last the boon I crave  
—Far from rush and crush of highways,  
In the hush of hidden byways  
Let me stand by Dante's grave.

Here he found, the mad world fleeing,  
Conflict-weary, spirit-sore,  
What the world had ne'er afforded—  
Here to him was peace accorded  
—God's own peace for evermore.

Let me list, where into silence  
Sank the deathless poet's song,  
Nightingales, that in the sighing  
Branches, deep in shadow lying,  
Voice love's woe the whole night long.

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## EVENING WALK TO MALAMOCCO

**S**LOWLY dies the day in glory;  
Lightly on the far lagoons  
—Now in gleaming sunshine sparkling,  
Now in gloomy shadow darkling,  
Writes the sea-wind mystic runes.

In the hush from heights of ether  
Over dunes and mountain-side,  
Out of arching heaven's dominion  
Angel-like on noiseless pinion  
Droops and falls the eventide.

Soothing calm of sunset-mildness  
Sinks upon the flashing west,  
Flooding with supernal shimmer  
Floating isles that flush and glimmer  
Like the regions of the blest.

Even over San Servilio<sup>1</sup>  
Heaven has hung its golden fleece  
—Restless souls, by torments riven,  
E'en to you I deem is given  
One blest hour of perfect peace!

<sup>1</sup> A Venetian Asylum.



# Carl B. H. Wolff

## A SILENT HOUR

PORING over ancient parchments  
That proclaim in florid language  
Many a Doge's might and glory,  
Pride and ruthless deeds of vengeance  
—In the Palace Viviani,  
Hour on hour I while away.  
Cool and calm is this seclusion.  
Only through the half-closed shutters  
Of the lofty pointed windows  
Now and then I hear a plashing,  
Hear the cleaving stroke, the rudder  
Of a passing gondola;  
While the uproused heaving waters  
Lash and dash, all life and rhythm,  
'Gainst the boat-side, long and slender.

Once more silence.  
Only sometimes through the stillness  
Soft and deep tones of an organ,  
And the sound of children's singing  
From a church unseen and distant  
Come, harmoniously blended.

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## GENOA

**R**IGHTLY art thou styled Superba,  
Cinctured with thy bulwark crown,  
Palaces their glories lending,  
Ocean wave and mountain blending,  
Ages old is thy renown!

Ships thou saw'st of every nation  
Landward into harbour glide;  
Seaward in the days departed,  
Thy Dorias lion-hearted,  
Men-of-war to victory ride.

Blackened once by the miner's blasting,  
Rock-hewn terraces arise;  
Royal demesnes of radiant whiteness  
Grace thy slopes that bask in brightness  
'Neath thine all unclouded skies.

Farther yet from the sunny harbour  
Lies a haven on the hill  
—Stress of storms no more will cumber  
Those who in its shadow slumber,  
—Sunlight-weary—deep and still.

## Carl B. H. Wolff

Chaste camellias strew pale petals  
O'er their proud patrician-dead;  
But above the lowly sleeping,  
Just a fickle hedge-rose peeping,  
Nods, all grace, her flighty head.

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## THE RUINS OF PAESTUM

AND now I knew it—I was near the goal!  
Ah! in this hour of hope's high culmination,  
An eagerness, a straining expectation,  
Immingled with a joy, that almost pained my soul . . .  
White field-narcissi shimmering far around,  
—A subtle air of unreality  
O'erbreathing all—  
Behind me lay, with wall-flowers brightly crowned,  
Paestum's ancient wall . . .  
Still towards the east to pilgrims open wide,  
The last old gateway lies;  
As if from wreck and ruin might upbloom  
A hope that after deathly night and gloom  
A morn would yet arise  
For that Greek city of great years of yore  
—Paestum now no more.

Too rapt to pause by many a classic trace,  
Revealing e'en in dust unrivalled grace  
Of art in days bygone,  
Past humble huts, all dearth and desolation,  
Waste-land around and signs of devastation,  
The wanderer hastens on.

## Carl B. H. Wolff

And where the stealthy, stifling ivy creeps,  
And asphodel its fadeless beauty keeps,  
While, haughtily above a maze of thorns,  
Acanthus stiffly lifts the lance-like leaves  
That, without cease, blue clematis adorns  
With the loose starry nets she weaves and weaves  
—Lo! in a majesty that dumbly Time defies,  
In sudden view the sanctuaries of the gods  
—All that dire fate predestined to outlast  
The pristine pride of Paestum's wondrous past—  
Paestum's temples rise!

Upon the strangers' awe-struck little group,  
As under some magician's mighty spell,  
A solemn silence fell,  
When all at once,  
From Neptune's bronze-brown temple ruins roused,  
Dense flocks of daws that drearily had drowsed  
In motionless repose,  
With flapping sable wings affrighted rose  
And, hoarsely cawing, out in phalanx flew  
To sea—the open sea.

And then no sound was heard—nor voice, nor cry  
No startled echo weirdly made reply.  
The sea—a line of softest sapphire-blue,  
That through the ruins shines—  
One deep-drawn sigh beneath a cloudless sky  
Reposefully was breathing;

## Carl B. H. Wolff

No ruffling breeze across the surface swept;  
And far away—the sun around them wreathing  
A sultry haze—arose  
The still, still Apennines,  
Whereon in weariness the noonday slept.

# Carl B. H. Wolff

## THE SETTING SUN

I STAYED behind alone.

A sadness in the summer-air was breathing,  
Round every ragged bush its sorcery wreathing  
—Hic jacet! Fancy read on every stone.  
A lizard that I from the sunshine frightened;  
Two meagre goats that on the barren ground  
Scant pasture sought with many a nimble bound,  
And then the youthful herd, as past he strode,  
Were all that far around of life I sighted . . .  
The first shy shade of evening now was falling,  
And to its mate a lonely bird was calling,  
When noiselessly along the dusty road  
A carriage quickly rolled.  
It stopped, a lady speedily alighted  
—One graceful still, although autumnal rime  
Had paled the locks of her auroral prime,  
And in her bearing there meseemed an air  
—That indefinable and touching air—  
Of lifelong liveness unallayed by time.

A while I watched her in the waning light  
—She seemed to me to wander without aim,  
And soon was lost to sight.

## Carl B. H. Wolff

When lo, as I approached the Vesta-temple,  
A voice, as if in ardent invocation,  
With measure meet and stately intonation,  
Startling the stillness, from the ruin came,  
And looking up, I listened—  
And where the pillars of the portal glistened,  
There with flat hands, outstretched and high upheld,  
As votaries prayed of eld,  
Within that shrine of hallowed maidenhood  
—Greek rhythms to a ruby-gleaming sun  
Declaiming o'er the sea ere day was done,  
All else forgetting, the lorn stranger stood.

“Grotesque!” perchance you chide. Can I gainsay?  
—And yet above it all  
A hallowing breath of the sublime there lay,  
That stayed my steps and held them fast in thrall,  
As on my sight there broke  
This faded vestal who in fervour spoke,  
Gazing beyond Paestum into distance,  
Over the ruins desolate and hoary,  
As in a vision  
Over her own unfruitful gray existence,  
On unattainable far fields Elysian  
In all the glamour of their sunset-glory.



# Carl B. H. Wolff

## FULFILMENT

I N youth, with eyes of yearning expectation,  
I used to gaze upon the Far-away,  
Whereon the haze, the subtle fascination  
And all the pathos of the distance lay.

A voice, too, haunted me—a voice mysterious,  
That stole like whisper through the day's loud hum;  
But in night-virgils, stirring and imperious,  
Rang like a clarion-call its thrilling: COME!

I came—As one performs a welcome duty,  
On this enchanted ground my foot I set;  
Fulfilled I see my wildest dreams of beauty  
At every step I take; and yet—and yet—

Amid a thousand charms around me thronging,  
One, one I miss that ever mocked control—  
—That sweetest—that illimitable longing  
Has fallen from my soul.



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